

The capture of this specimen makes the second record, so far as the writer is aware, for the Atlantic Ocean, the species belonging properly to the 'South Seas,' especially in the neighborhood of Australia and New Zealand. The two other Atlantic records are the Canary Islands (*vide* Webb and Berthelot), and near the mouth of the Rio de la Plata. The latter refers to the specimen upon which the species (*Procellaria marina* Lath.) was originally based, while the former is the basis of *Procellaria hypoleuca* Webb and Berth.—ROBERT RIDGWAY, *Washington, D. C.*

Probable Occurrence of *Diomedea exulans* in Florida.—Mr. B. H. Barrett, writing from Jacksonville, Fla., under date of September 14, 1885, says: "Sometime during the month of May a great Wandering Albatross was seen at the mouth of the St. John's River twenty miles below this city. Knowing it to be a very rare occurrence, I questioned several who saw the bird, and from their description I have no doubt of its authenticity." A later letter from Mr. Barrett relating to this occurrence is accompanied by a letter from Mr. Alfred Ames Howlett, one of the fortunate observers of the bird, from which I quote the following: "In reply to your request for a statement regarding an Albatross that I told you I had seen at the mouth of the St. John's River this year, I would say that I was in the pilot-house of my tug, the 'J. E. Stevens,' talking with Captain N. Broward, when I discovered a large bird hovering near the surface of the water in the channel near 'Ward's Bank,' and on coming nearer the bird arose and circled within seventy-five yards of the tug, and I *positively identified* it as an Albatross; and on the return of the tug I carried my gun with me and, although seen again I was unable to get within shot. The last seen of the bird it was winging its way seaward. . . . I am positive of the bird's identity from mounted specimens I have seen and from ornithological works I have read."—ELLIOTT COUES, *Washington, D. C.*

The Bill of the Horned Puffin (*Ceratorhinus monocerata*).—While at Santa Barbara and San Diego, Cal., in November and December, I had the opportunity to examine a number of specimens of this species, probably not fewer than twenty, old and young. Considering the abundance of the bird off the California coast, and even in the harbors, its rarity in collections is somewhat surprising. These Puffins are tame enough, as a rule, to be approached and shot without difficulty, and even when they dive they do not remain under long, and may be followed by observing their course and obtained with very little trouble. Enough specimens may, however, be secured (or could in December, 1884) by a walk along the beach of San Diego Bay, or anywhere on the coast, after a storm, when considerable numbers are cast up by the waves in a state of perfect preservation—apparently drowned, for they show no signs of violence, either externally or internally.

It was interesting to observe that the curious upright horn-like appendage of the bill, which writers appear to consider more or less peculiar to the breeding season, was present in all specimens examined, in shape of

a fleshy protuberance or knob near the base of the upper mandible. Upon looking up Cassin's description of the *Cerorhina suckleyi*, now known to be the young of the present species, and Dr Coues's account of this bird in Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phila., 1868, I find that the young Horn-billed Puffin, just casting the downy plumage, is described as having this same fleshy knob on the bill. As my specimens show that the knob is present in winter, I am inclined to believe that the fleshy knob is really entirely persistent, and is the matrix or core, so to speak, of the horny excrescence, which latter is superimposed upon it only on the near approach of the mating season, and shed at its end, leaving a 'horn' behind, though quite devoid of its horny sheath. In ordinary museum specimens this tough membranous knob is not apparent, having so dried away and shrunk to the bill as to have lost its distinctive character.

It is to be hoped that California collectors will be able to furnish a series of notes on the bill of this species, showing its character at the several seasons. At present the matter cannot be said to be fully understood.—H. W. HENSHAW, *Washington, D. C.*

A Crested Auk on the Massachusetts Coast.—While on a recent collecting trip to Chatham, Mass., I was asked by Mr. A. W. Baker, an intelligent and trustworthy gunner and fisherman of that place, to give him the name of a bird killed at Chatham during the winter of 1884-'85, which he described as being very much like the Little Auk or Dovekie in form and color, though a little larger, and having a tuft of narrow, pointed feathers on the front of the head, curving upward and forward. From his minute description of the bird it was evidently one of the Little Crested Auks, apparently *Simorhynchus cristatellus*—a bird he had otherwise never seen or heard of, but which he very accurately described. That the bird was one of the Little Crested Auks there can be no doubt.

The occurrence of such a bird on the Massachusetts coast is of course entirely accidental and surprising. We have, however, the Tufted Puffin (*Lunda cirrhata*) recorded from Greenland and the coast of Maine, the Black-throated Guillemot (*Synthliborhamphus antiquus*) from Wisconsin (*cf.* Sennett, Auk, I, p. 98), and the Paroquet Auk (*Cyclorhynchus psittaculus*) from Sweden, showing that these Northwest Coast species of Alcidae are more or less given to wandering to points far remote from their proper habitats.—J. A. ALLEN, *American Museum of Natural History, New York City.*

The Thick-billed Grebes (*Podilymbus podiceps*) Breeding in Kansas.—B. L. Bennett and V. L. Kellogg of Emporia, Kans., both report finding, May 26, 1885, in a pond or slough near the city, quite a number of the nests of this bird containing from five to ten eggs each.—N. S. Goss, *Topeka, Kans.*